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X-MEN™

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ALL NEW!

The X-MEN FEATURING: THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR X

THIS IS FOR REAL!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP THE UNCANNY X-MEN

THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT

EXIT CYCLOPS!

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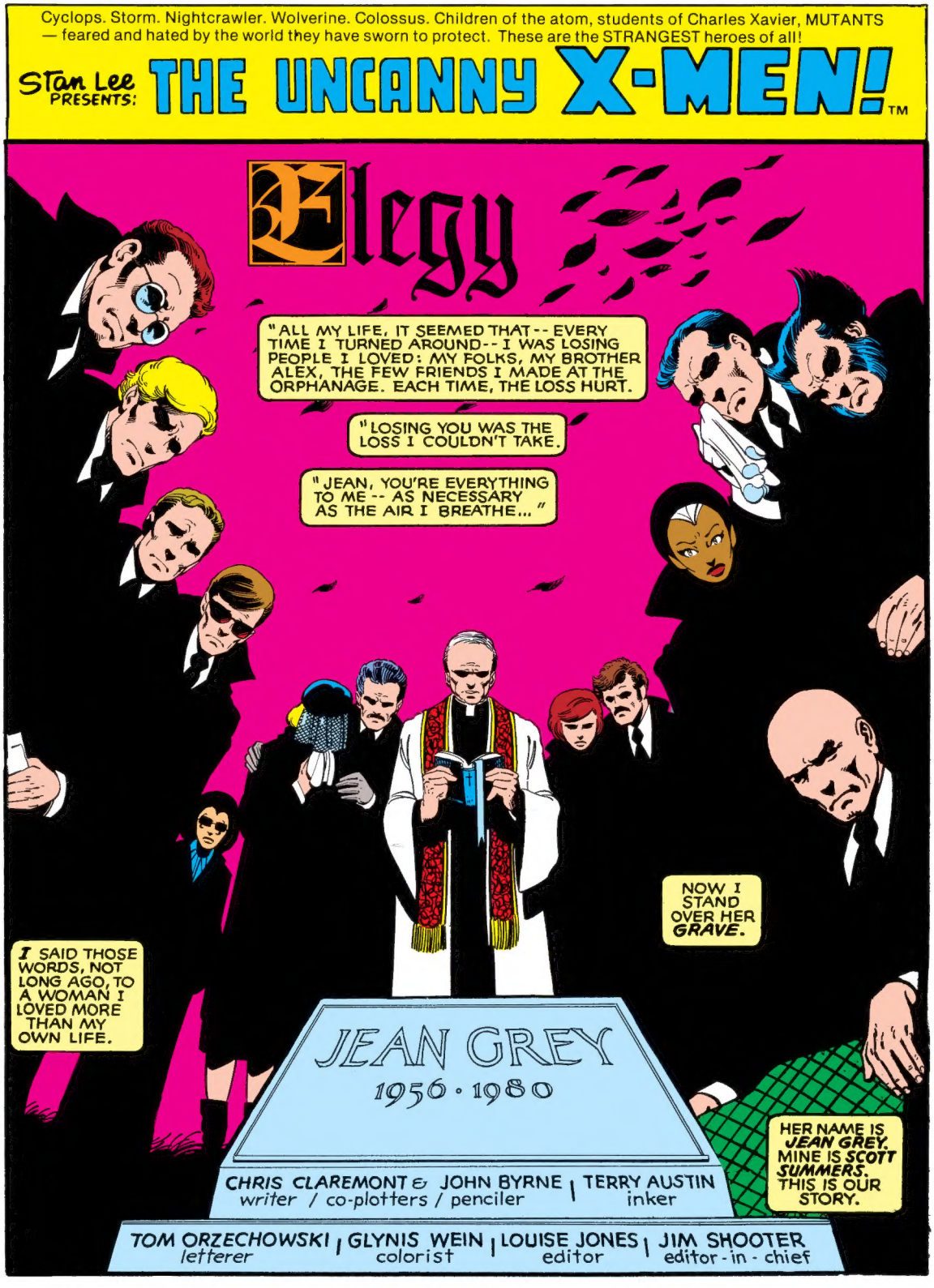

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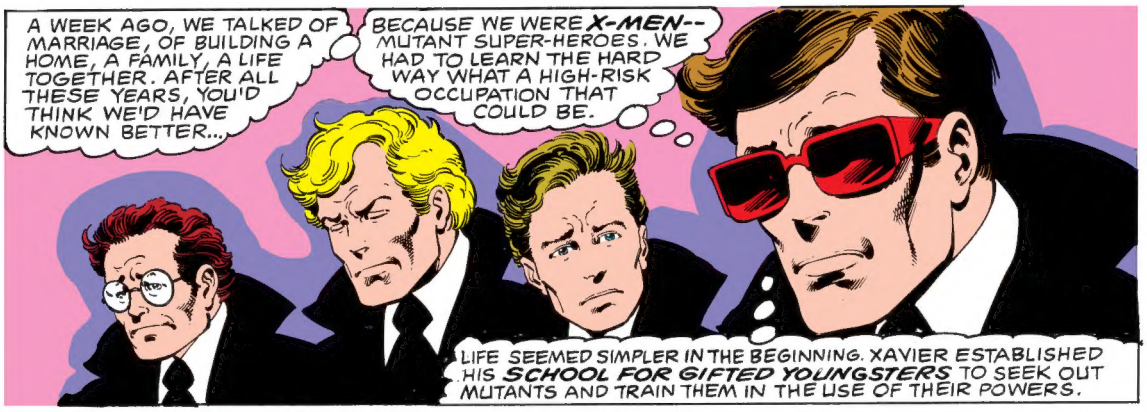
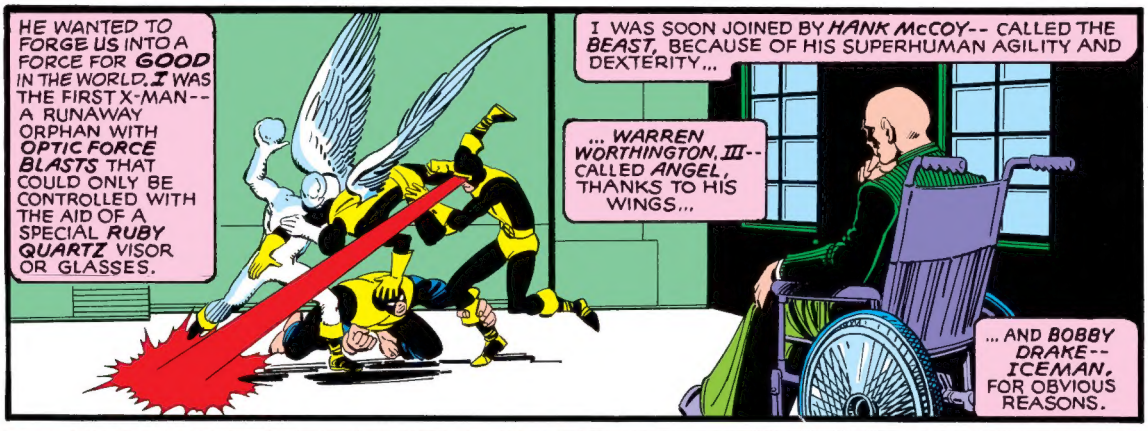
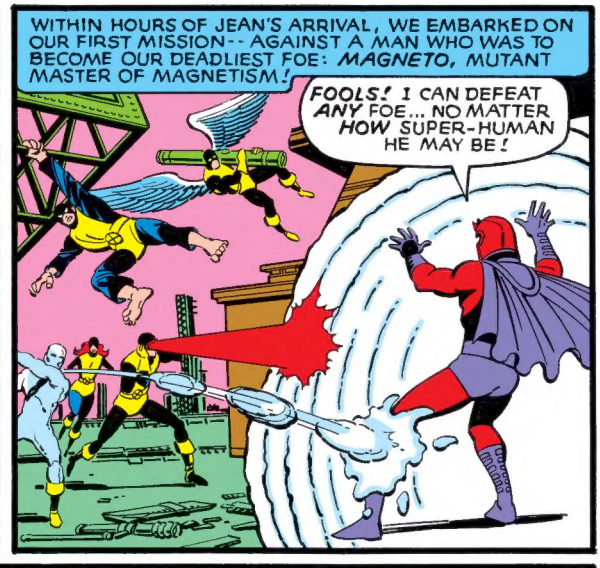
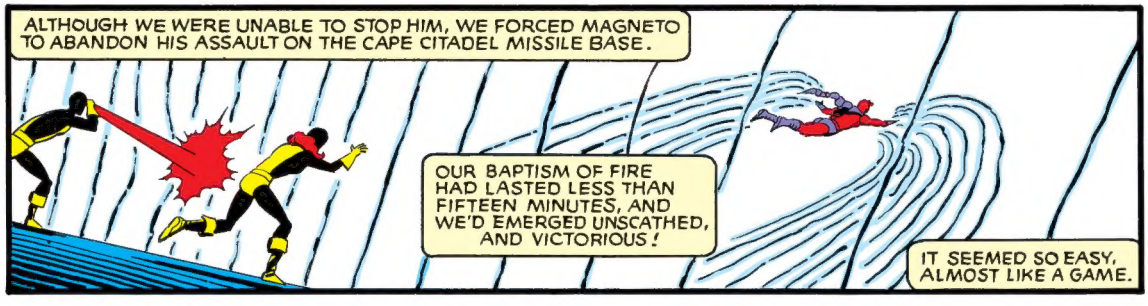

A WEEK AGO, WE TALKED OF MARRIAGE, OF BUILDING A HOME, A FAMILY, A LIFE TOGETHER. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU'D THINK WE'D HAVE KNOWN BETTER...
BECAUSE WE WERE X-MEN-- MUTANT SUPER-HEROES. WE HAD TO LEARN THE HARD WAY WHAT A HIGH-RISK OCCUPATION THAT COULD BE.
LIFE SEEMED SIMPLER IN THE BEGINNING. XAVIER ESTABLISHED HIS SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS TO SEEK OUT MUTANTS AND TRAIN THEM IN THE USE OF THEIR POWERS.


HE WANTED TO FORGE US INTO A FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD. I WAS THE FIRST X-MAN-- A RUNAWAY ORPHAN WITH OPTIC FORCE BLASTS THAT COULD ONLY BE CONTROLLED WITH THE AID OF A SPECIAL RUBY QUARTZ VISOR OR GLASSES.
I WAS SOON JOINED BY HANK McCOY-- CALLED THE BEAST, BECAUSE OF HIS SUPERHUMAN AGILITY AND DEXTERITY...
... WARREN WORTHINGTON, III-- CALLED ANGEL, THANKS TO HIS WINGS...
... AND BOBBY DRAKE-- ICEMAN, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

FINALLY, THERE WAS JEAN GREY-- MARVEL GIRL. SHE WAS A TELEKINETIC, ABLE TO MOVE SOLID OBJECTS SOLELY BY THE POWER OF HER OWN MIND.
A REDHEAD! LOOK AT THAT FACE... AND THE REST OF HER!
ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M IN NO HURRY TO GRADUATE FROM THIS PLACE.
A GIRL... BIG DEAL!


WITHIN HOURS OF JEAN'S ARRIVAL, WE EMBARKED ON OUR FIRST MISSION-- AGAINST A MAN WHO WAS TO BECOME OUR DEADLIEST FOE: MAGNETO, MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM!
FOOLS! I CAN DEFEAT ANY FOE... NO MATTER HOW SUPER-HUMAN HE MAY BE!


ALTHOUGH WE WERE UNABLE TO STOP HIM, WE FORCED MAGNETO TO ABANDON HIS ASSAULT ON THE CAPE CITADEL MISSILE BASE.
OUR BAPTISM OF FIRE HAD LASTED LESS THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES, AND WE'D EMERGED UNSCATHED, AND VICTORIOUS!
IT SEEMED SO EASY, ALMOST LIKE A GAME.

WE THOUGHT WE WERE PRETTY HOT STUFF-- UNTIL WE FOUGHT THE ***VANISHER***. FOR ALL OUR VAUNTED PROWESS, IT STILL TOOK PROFESSOR X'S PSI-POWERS TO DEFEAT HIM. GOOD AS WE WERE, WE STILL HAD A ***LOT*** TO LEARN.

AS TIME PASSED, I BECAME INCREASINGLY ATTRACTED TO JEAN-- YET I SAID NOTHING, DID NOTHING. I'D BEEN HURT TOO OFTEN, TOO DEEPLY, IN THE STATE ORPHANAGE WHERE I GREW UP. I WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BE HURT AGAIN.

ALSO, I FELT I HAD NO RIGHT TO LOVE ***ANYONE*** SO LONG AS MY OPTIC BLASTS REMAINED UNCONTROLLABLE.

THEN, MAGNETO RE-APPEARED.

THIS TIME, HE WASN'T ALONE. TOGETHER WITH QUICKSILVER, THE SCARLET WITCH, MASTER-MIND AND THE TOAD, HE FORMED A ***BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS***.

THEY TRIED TO OVERTHROW THE SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLIC OF SAN MARCO. WE STOPPED THEM, BUT OURS WAS A ***PYRRHIC*** VICTORY.

THE BATTLE LEFT THE PROFESSOR BADLY INJURED, HIS PSI-ABILITIES APPARENTLY ***GONE***. WHEN MAGNETO AMBUSHED US IN NEW YORK, WE WERE ON OUR OWN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THAT FIGHT RAGED FROM THE LEXINGTON AVENUE SUBWAY, THROUGH GRAND CENTRAL STATION, WHERE ANGEL WAS CAPTURED--

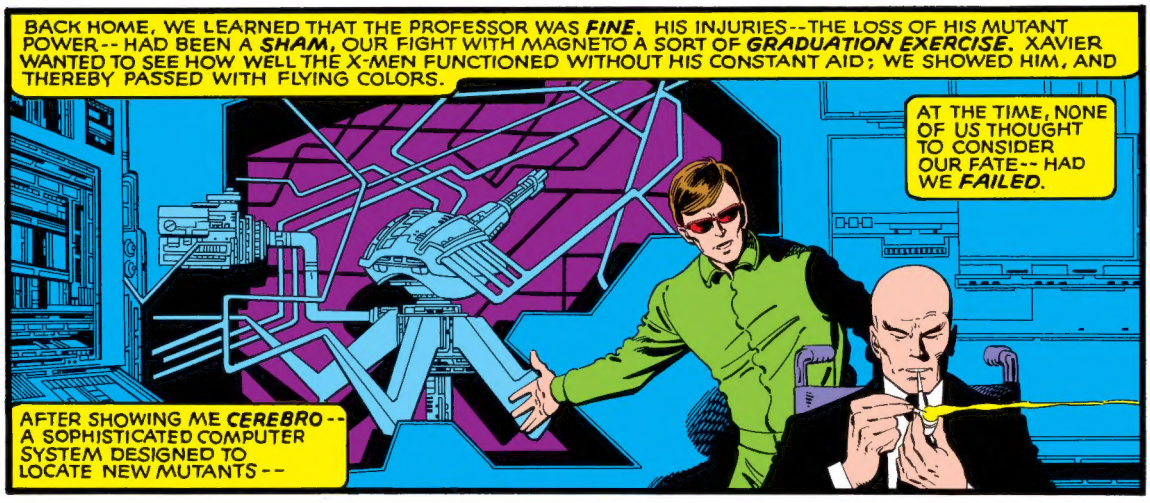
--TO ***ASTEROID M***, MAGNETO'S ORBITING HEADQUARTERS. AGAIN, AS THEY HAD BEFORE, QUICKSILVER AND HIS SISTER SURREPTITIOUSLY ***HELPED*** US. THEY WERE TORN BY CONFLICTING LOYALTIES.

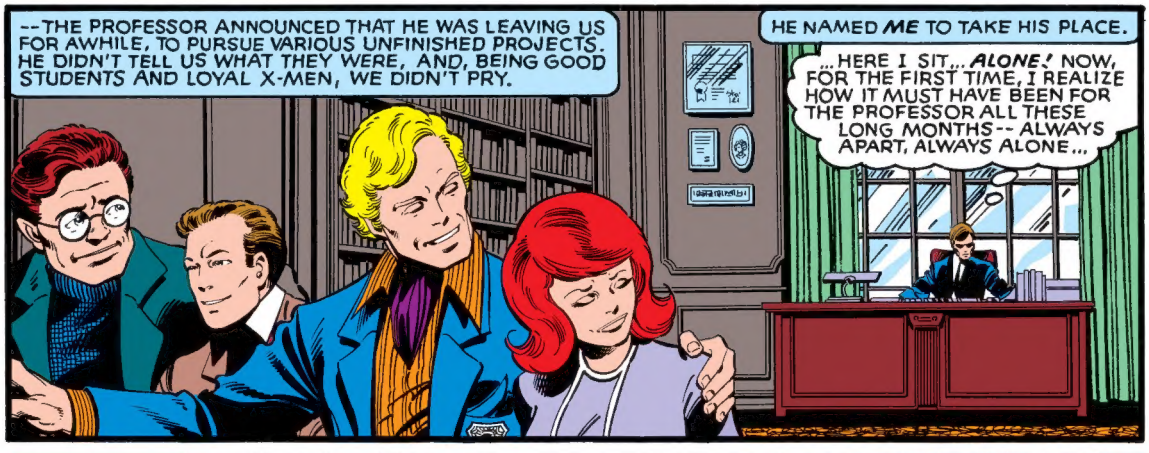
THEY OWED MAGNETO THEIR LIVES, YET IN THEIR HEARTS, THEY ***HATED*** WHAT HE MADE THEM DO.

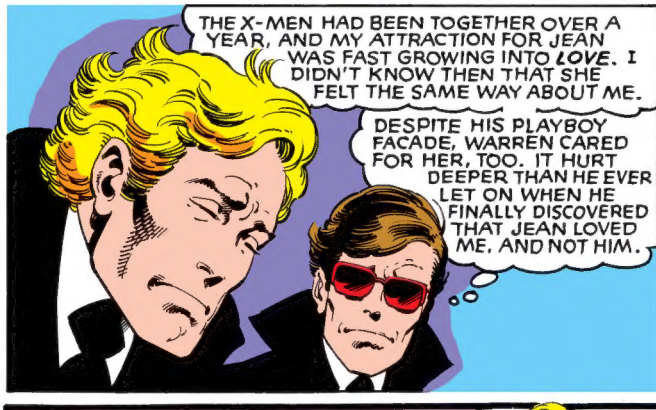
MONTHS LATER, THEY LEFT MAGNETO TO BECOME HONORED MEMBERS OF THE ***AVENGERS***.

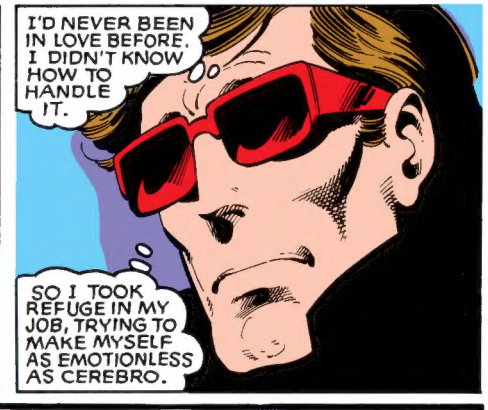
WE RESCUED ANGEL, DESTROYED ASTEROID M, AND RETURNED TO EARTH RELATIVELY UNSCATHED. IN RETROSPECT, I MARVEL AT OUR LUCK.

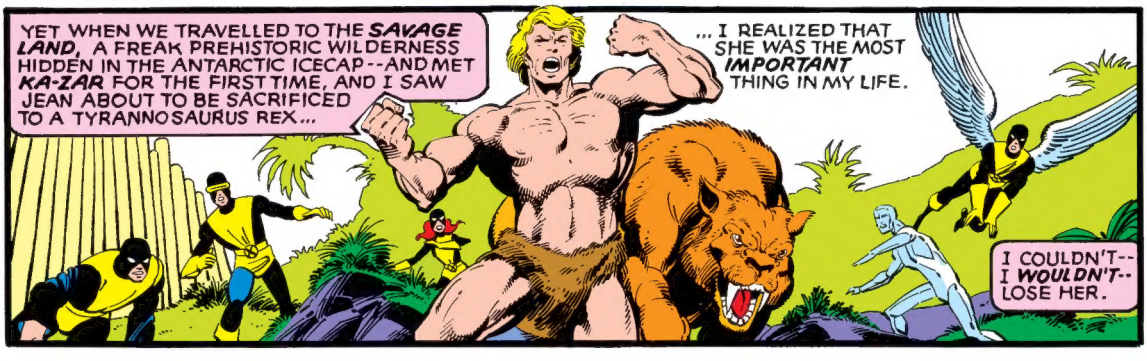
MAGNETO, OF COURSE, ***ESCAPED***.

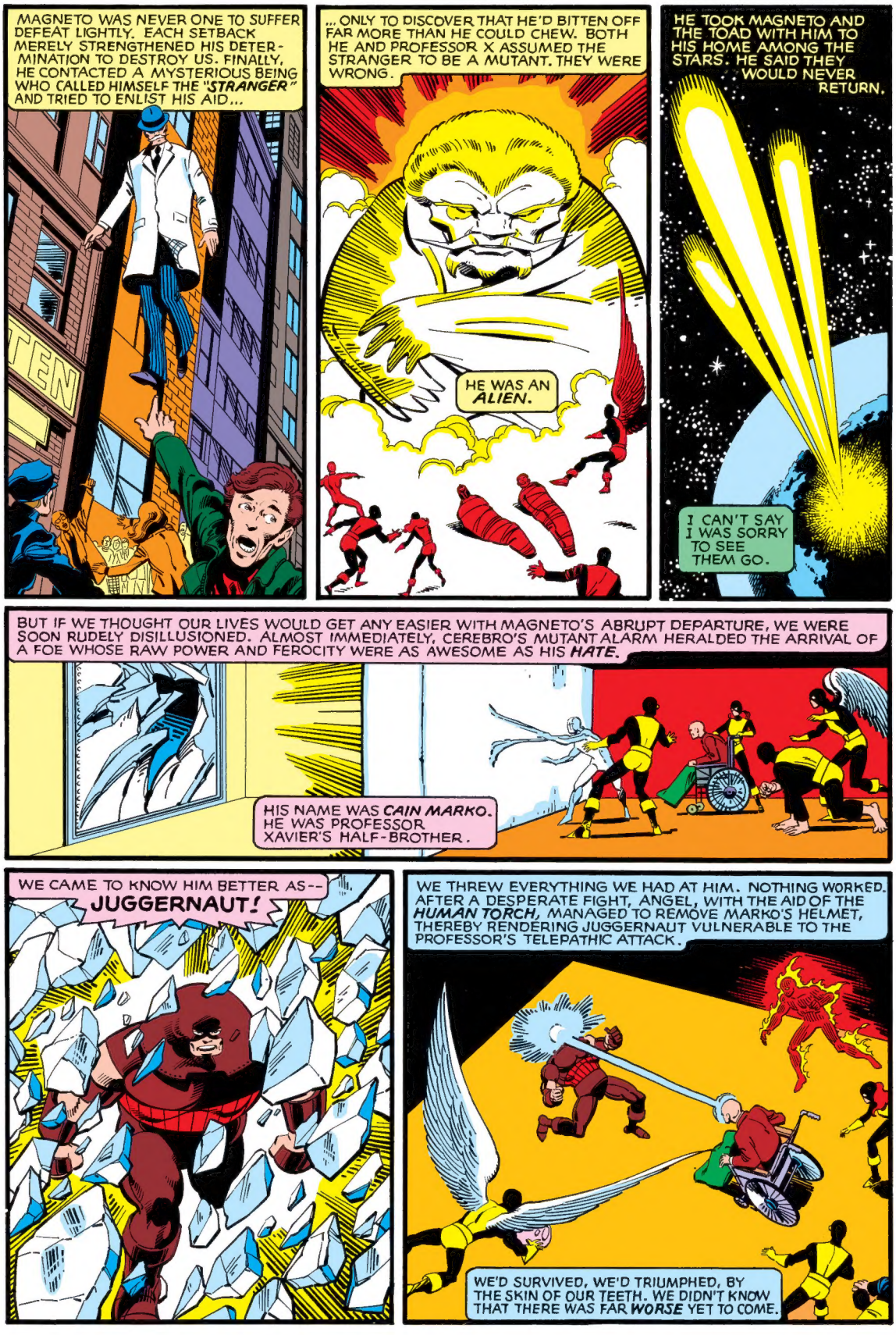

BACK HOME, WE LEARNED THAT THE PROFESSOR WAS FINE. HIS INJURIES--THE LOSS OF HIS MUTANT POWER-- HAD BEEN A SHAM, OUR FIGHT WITH MAGNETO A SORT OF GRADUATION EXERCISE. XAVIER WANTED TO SEE HOW WELL THE X-MEN FUNCTIONED WITHOUT HIS CONSTANT AID; WE SHOWED HIM, AND THEREBY PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS.
AT THE TIME, NONE OF US THOUGHT TO CONSIDER OUR FATE-- HAD WE FAILED.
AFTER SHOWING ME CEREBRO-- A SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER SYSTEM DESIGNED TO LOCATE NEW MUTANTS--

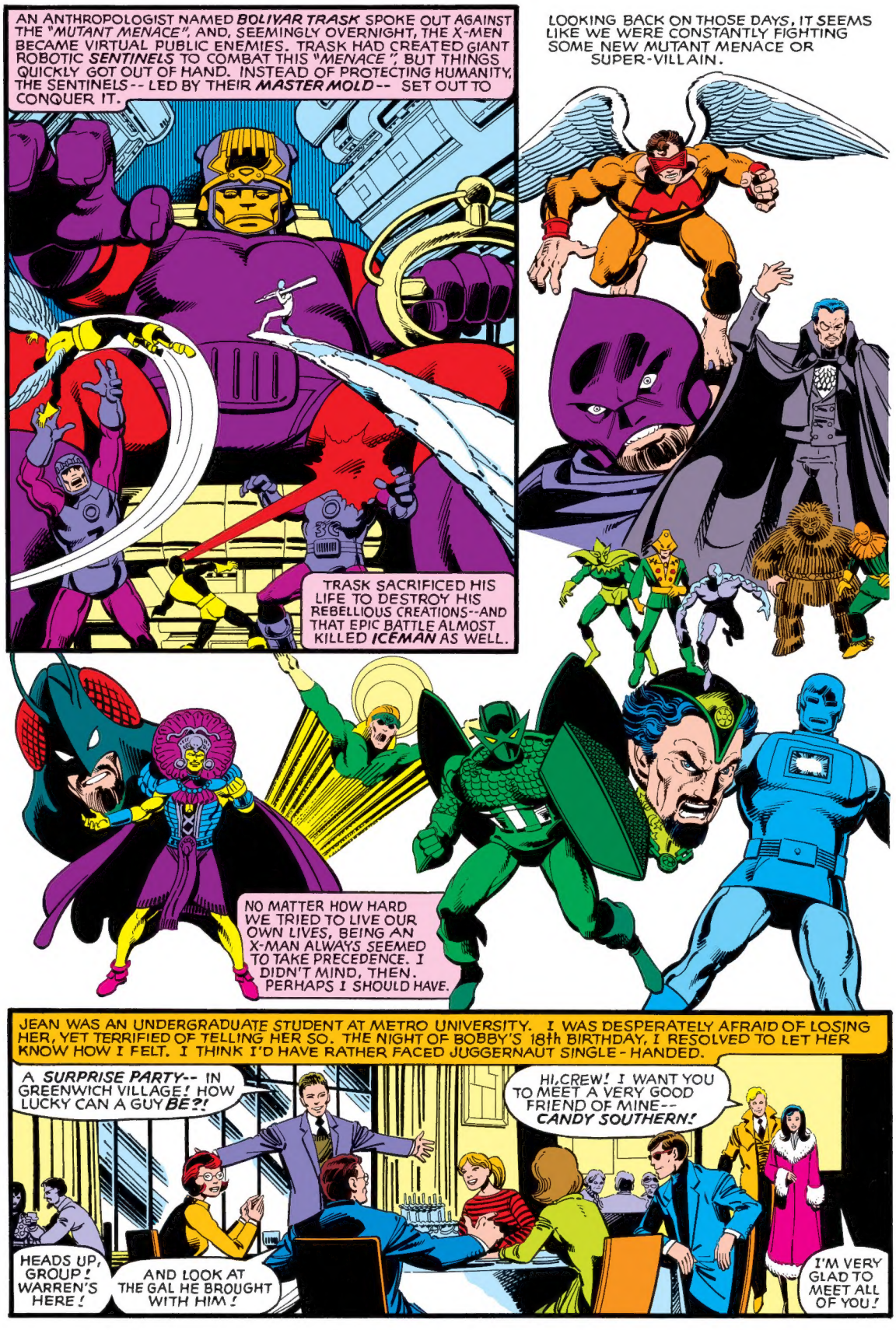

--THE PROFESSOR ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS LEAVING US FOR AWHILE, TO PURSUE VARIOUS UNFINISHED PROJECTS. HE DIDN'T TELL US WHAT THEY WERE, AND, BEING GOOD STUDENTS AND LOYAL X-MEN, WE DIDN'T PRY.
HE NAMED ME TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
...HERE I SIT... ALONE! NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, I REALIZE HOW IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR THE PROFESSOR ALL THESE LONG MONTHS-- ALWAYS APART, ALWAYS ALONE...

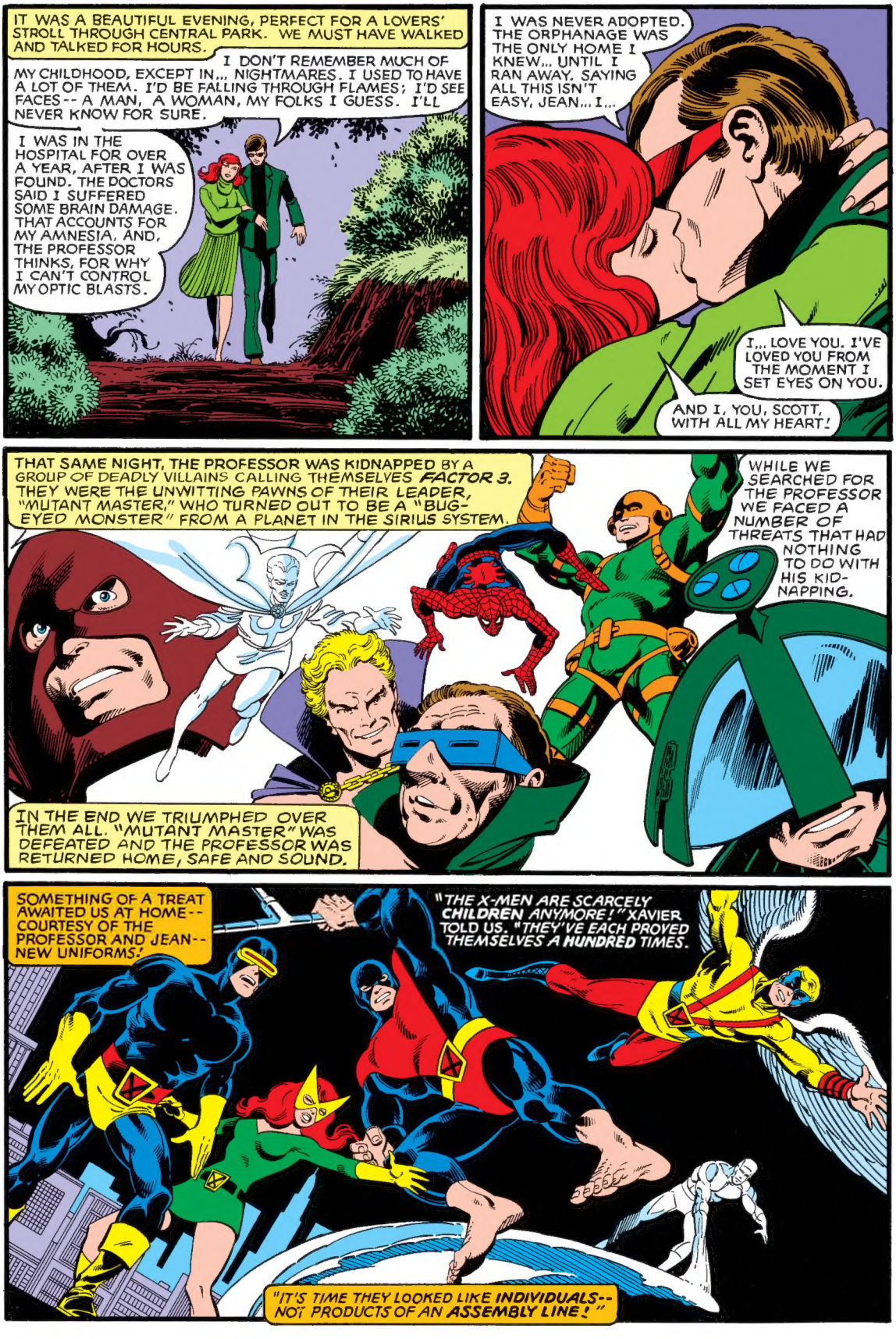

THE X-MEN HAD BEEN TOGETHER OVER A YEAR, AND MY ATTRACTION FOR JEAN WAS FAST GROWING INTO LOVE. I DIDN'T KNOW THEN THAT SHE FELT THE SAME WAY ABOUT ME.
DESPITE HIS PLAYBOY FACADE, WARREN CARED FOR HER, TOO. IT HURT DEEPER THAN HE EVER LET ON WHEN HE FINALLY DISCOVERED THAT JEAN LOVED ME, AND NOT HIM.


I'D NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE IT.
SO I TOOK REFUGE IN MY JOB, TRYING TO MAKE MYSELF AS EMOTIONLESS AS CEREBRO.


YET WHEN WE TRAVELLED TO THE SAVAGE LAND, A FREAK PREHISTORIC WILDERNESS HIDDEN IN THE ANTARCTIC ICECAP--AND MET KA-ZAR FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND I SAW JEAN ABOUT TO BE SACRIFICED TO A TYRANNOSAURUS REX...
... I REALIZED THAT SHE WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE.
I COULDN'T-- I WOULDN'T-- LOSE HER.

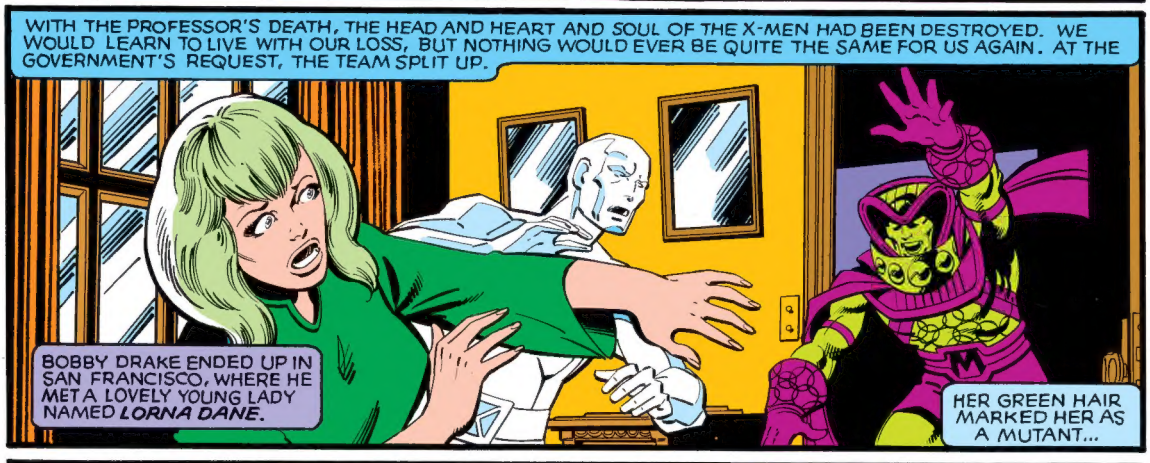

MAGNETO WAS NEVER ONE TO SUFFER DEFEAT LIGHTLY. EACH SETBACK MERELY STRENGTHENED HIS DETERMINATION TO DESTROY US. FINALLY, HE CONTACTED A MYSTERIOUS BEING WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE "STRANGER" AND TRIED TO ENLIST HIS AID...
TEN
...ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT HE'D BITTEN OFF FAR MORE THAN HE COULD CHEW. BOTH HE AND PROFESSOR X ASSUMED THE STRANGER TO BE A MUTANT. THEY WERE WRONG.
HE WAS AN ALIEN.
HE TOOK MAGNETO AND THE TOAD WITH HIM TO HIS HOME AMONG THE STARS. HE SAID THEY WOULD NEVER RETURN.
I CAN'T SAY I WAS SORRY TO SEE THEM GO.
BUT IF WE THOUGHT OUR LIVES WOULD GET ANY EASIER WITH MAGNETO'S ABRUPT DEPARTURE, WE WERE SOON RUDELY DISILLUSIONED. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, CEREBRO'S MUTANT ALARM HERALDED THE ARRIVAL OF A FOE WHOSE RAW POWER AND FEROCITY WERE AS AWESOME AS HIS HATE.
HIS NAME WAS CAIN MARKO. HE WAS PROFESSOR XAVIER'S HALF-BROTHER.
WE CAME TO KNOW HIM BETTER AS--
JUGGERNAUT!
WE THREW EVERYTHING WE HAD AT HIM. NOTHING WORKED. AFTER A DESPERATE FIGHT, ANGEL, WITH THE AID OF THE HUMAN TORCH, MANAGED TO REMOVE MARKO'S HELMET, THEREBY RENDERING JUGGERNAUT VULNERABLE TO THE PROFESSOR'S TELEPATHIC ATTACK.
WE'D SURVIVED, WE'D TRIUMPHED, BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH. WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT THERE WAS FAR WORSE YET TO COME.

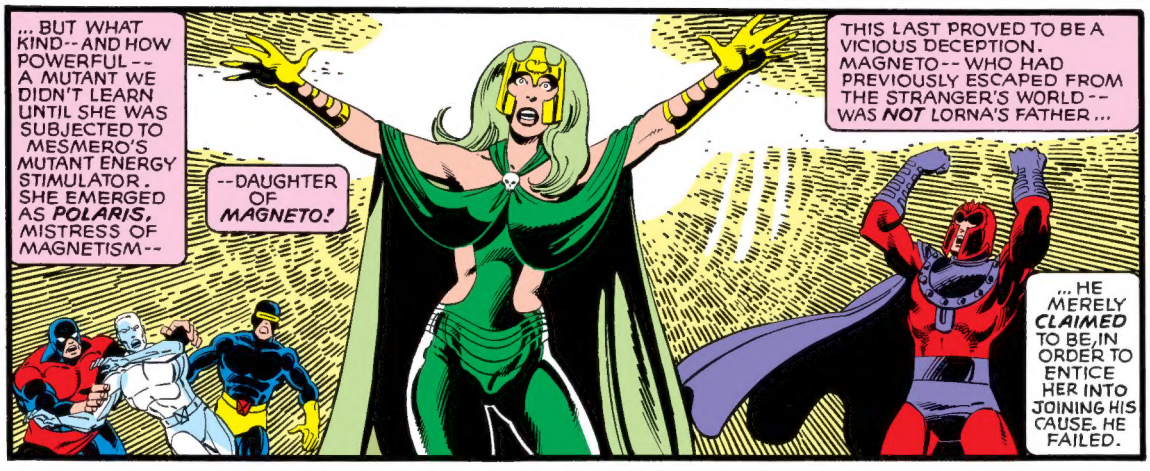

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST NAMED BOLIVAR TRASK SPOKE OUT AGAINST THE "MUTANT MENACE", AND, SEEMINGLY OVERNIGHT, THE X-MEN BECAME VIRTUAL PUBLIC ENEMIES. TRASK HAD CREATED GIANT ROBOTIC SENTINELS TO COMBAT THIS "MENACE", BUT THINGS QUICKLY GOT OUT OF HAND. INSTEAD OF PROTECTING HUMANITY, THE SENTINELS -- LED BY THEIR MASTER MOLD -- SET OUT TO CONQUER IT.
TRASK SACRIFICED HIS LIFE TO DESTROY HIS REBELLIOUS CREATIONS--AND THAT EPIC BATTLE ALMOST KILLED ICEMAN AS WELL.
LOOKING BACK ON THOSE DAYS, IT SEEMS LIKE WE WERE CONSTANTLY FIGHTING SOME NEW MUTANT MENACE OR SUPER-VILLAIN.
NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRIED TO LIVE OUR OWN LIVES, BEING AN X-MAN ALWAYS SEEMED TO TAKE PRECEDENCE. I DIDN'T MIND, THEN. PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE.
JEAN WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AT METRO UNIVERSITY. I WAS DESPERATELY AFRAID OF LOSING HER, YET TERRIFIED OF TELLING HER SO. THE NIGHT OF BOBBY'S 18th BIRTHDAY, I RESOLVED TO LET HER KNOW HOW I FELT. I THINK I'D HAVE RATHER FACED JUGGERNAUT SINGLE-HANDED.
A SURPRISE PARTY-- IN GREENWICH VILLAGE! HOW LUCKY CAN A GUY BE?!
HI, CREW! I WANT YOU TO MEET A VERY GOOD FRIEND OF MINE-- CANDY SOUTHERN!
HEADS UP, GROUP! WARREN'S HERE!
AND LOOK AT THE GAL HE BROUGHT WITH HIM!
I'M VERY GLAD TO MEET ALL OF YOU!


IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL EVENING, PERFECT FOR A LOVERS' STROLL THROUGH CENTRAL PARK. WE MUST HAVE WALKED AND TALKED FOR HOURS.
I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF MY CHILDHOOD, EXCEPT IN... NIGHTMARES. I USED TO HAVE A LOT OF THEM. I'D BE FALLING THROUGH FLAMES; I'D SEE FACES -- A MAN, A WOMAN, MY FOLKS I GUESS. I'LL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE.
I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL FOR OVER A YEAR, AFTER I WAS FOUND. THE DOCTORS SAID I SUFFERED SOME BRAIN DAMAGE. THAT ACCOUNTS FOR MY AMNESIA, AND, THE PROFESSOR THINKS, FOR WHY I CAN'T CONTROL MY OPTIC BLASTS.
I WAS NEVER ADOPTED. THE ORPHANAGE WAS THE ONLY HOME I KNEW... UNTIL I RAN AWAY. SAYING ALL THIS ISN'T EASY, JEAN... I...
I... LOVE YOU. I'VE LOVED YOU FROM THE MOMENT I SET EYES ON YOU.
AND I, YOU, SCOTT, WITH ALL MY HEART!
THAT SAME NIGHT, THE PROFESSOR WAS KIDNAPPED BY A GROUP OF DEADLY VILLAINS CALLING THEMSELVES FACTOR 3. THEY WERE THE UNWITTING PAWNS OF THEIR LEADER, "MUTANT MASTER," WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A "BUG-EYED MONSTER" FROM A PLANET IN THE SIRIUS SYSTEM.
WHILE WE SEARCHED FOR THE PROFESSOR WE FACED A NUMBER OF THREATS THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS KIDNAPPING.
IN THE END WE TRIUMPHED OVER THEM ALL. "MUTANT MASTER" WAS DEFEATED AND THE PROFESSOR WAS RETURNED HOME, SAFE AND SOUND.
SOMETHING OF A TREAT AWAITED US AT HOME -- COURTESY OF THE PROFESSOR AND JEAN -- NEW UNIFORMS!
"THE X-MEN ARE SCARCELY CHILDREN ANYMORE!" XAVIER TOLD US. "THEY'VE EACH PROVED THEMSELVES A HUNDRED TIMES.
"IT'S TIME THEY LOOKED LIKE INDIVIDUALS -- NOT PRODUCTS OF AN ASSEMBLY LINE!"

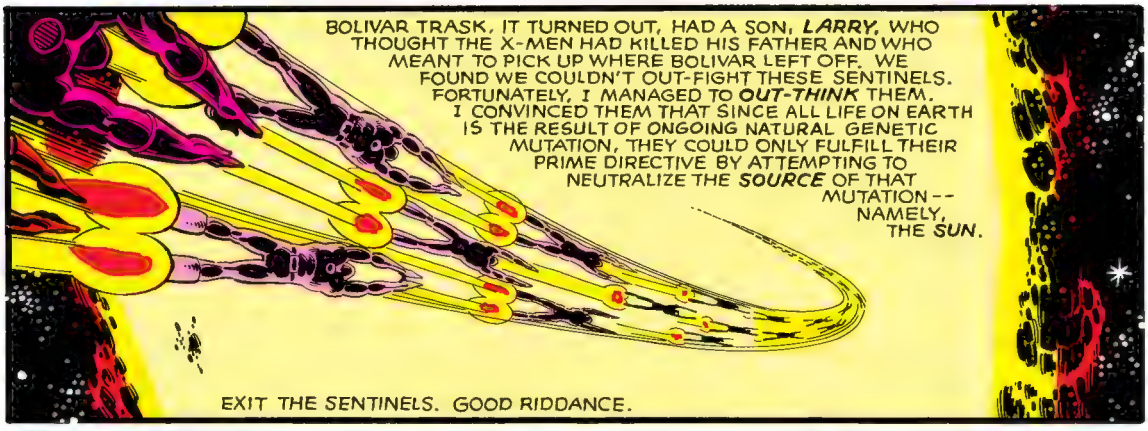
IN A SENSE, OUR NEW COSTUMES DID MARK OUR COMING OF AGE. CERTAINLY IT MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A GRIM CHAPTER IN OUR HISTORY.
IN THE SUBWAYS BENEATH MANHATTAN, WE FACED A SUBTERRANEAN POWER-HOUSE NAMED GROTESK.

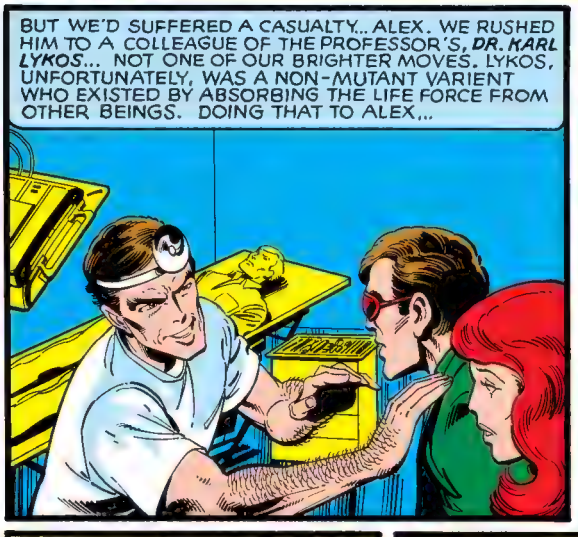
HE WAS THE LAST SURVIVOR OF A RACE EXTERMINATED BY RADIATION FROM NUCLEAR TESTS. HE WISHED TO PAY HUMANITY BACK IN KIND. WE STOPPED HIM, BUT IT COST US FAR MORE THAN WE'D EXPECTED...
PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER.

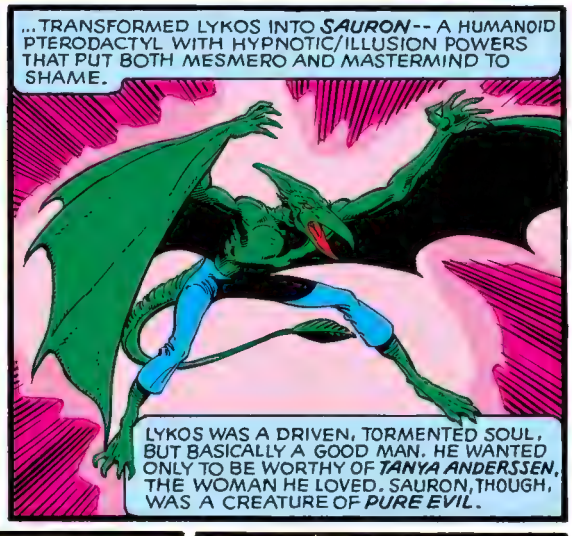

WITH THE PROFESSOR'S DEATH, THE HEAD AND HEART AND SOUL OF THE X-MEN HAD BEEN DESTROYED. WE WOULD LEARN TO LIVE WITH OUR LOSS, BUT NOTHING WOULD EVER BE QUITE THE SAME FOR US AGAIN. AT THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST, THE TEAM SPLIT UP.
BOBBY DRAKE ENDED UP IN SAN FRANCISCO, WHERE HE MET A LOVELY YOUNG LADY NAMED LORNA DANE.
HER GREEN HAIR MARKED HER AS A MUTANT...

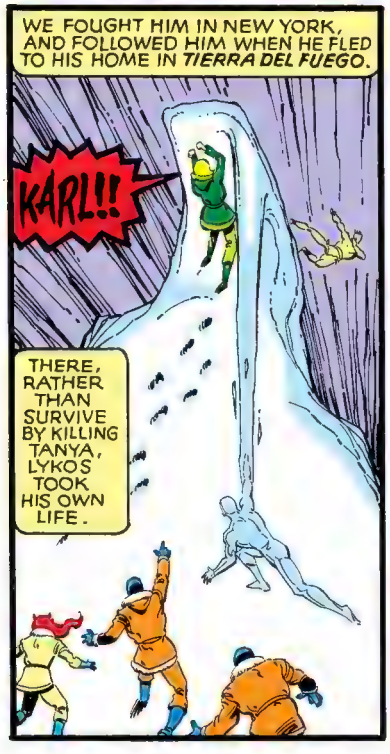

... BUT WHAT KIND-- AND HOW POWERFUL -- A MUTANT WE DIDN'T LEARN UNTIL SHE WAS SUBJECTED TO MESMERO'S MUTANT ENERGY STIMULATOR. SHE EMERGED AS POLARIS, MISTRESS OF MAGNETISM--
--DAUGHTER OF MAGNETO!
THIS LAST PROVED TO BE A VICIOUS DECEPTION. MAGNETO-- WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY ESCAPED FROM THE STRANGER'S WORLD -- WAS NOT LORNA'S FATHER...
... HE MERELY CLAIMED TO BE, IN ORDER TO ENTICE HER INTO JOINING HIS CAUSE. HE FAILED.

FBI EDICT OR NO, WE BEGAN TO DRIFT BACK TOGETHER. SEPARATING THE X-MEN HADN'T REALLY WORKED OUT. IT MERELY PROVED WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW, THAT THE WHOLE OF THE TEAM WAS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS.
WE WERE MORE THAN A SIMPLE FIGHTING TEAM. THE X-MEN WERE A FAMILY. IN MY CASE, THE ONLY FAMILY I HAD--
-- SAVE FOR MY YOUNGER BROTHER, ALEX.
LANDON COLLEGE
I INTRODUCED THE X-MEN TO HIM --AND HIM TO THEM --THE DAY HE GRADUATED FROM LANDON COLLEGE.
WE'D BEEN SEPARATED IN THE ORPHANAGE-- HE'D BEEN ADOPTED WHILE I'D BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL, IN A COMA. PROFESSOR X HELPED ME TRACK HIM DOWN, AND WE'D STAYED IN CLOSE TOUCH EVER SINCE. I KNEW HE WAS A MUTANT, BUT-- AS WITH LORNA-- WE DIDN'T DISCOVER THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HIS POWERS...
...UNTIL HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE LIVING PHARAOH.
THE TWO WERE SYMBIOTES, EACH DRAWING POWER FROM COSMIC RAYS AND FROM EACH OTHER.
AS ALEX'S ABILITY WAXED, THE PHARAOH'S WANED-- AND VICE VERSA. A FULL CHARGE TRANSFORMED THAT EGYPTIAN MADMAN INTO THE LIVING MONOLITH.
BUT WHEN HE WAS DEFEATED, ALL THAT RAW ENERGY FLOWED INTO ALEX. AND WHAT I FEARED MOST CAME TO PASS.
HE COULDN'T CONTROL IT.
IN HIS OWN WAY, HE WAS AS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AS I. UNABLE TO COPE WITH THAT DREAD REALIZATION--AND, TO BE HONEST, I CAN'T SAY I BLAME HIM-- HE FLED FROM THE X-MEN... RIGHT INTO THE ARMS OF A SENTINEL.


BOLIVAR TRASK, IT TURNED OUT, HAD A SON, LARRY, WHO THOUGHT THE X-MEN HAD KILLED HIS FATHER AND WHO MEANT TO PICK UP WHERE BOLIVAR LEFT OFF. WE FOUND WE COULDN'T OUT-FIGHT THESE SENTINELS. FORTUNATELY, I MANAGED TO OUT-THINK THEM. I CONVINCED THEM THAT SINCE ALL LIFE ON EARTH IS THE RESULT OF ONGOING NATURAL GENETIC MUTATION, THEY COULD ONLY FULFILL THEIR PRIME DIRECTIVE BY ATTEMPTING TO NEUTRALIZE THE SOURCE OF THAT MUTATION -- NAMELY, THE SUN.
EXIT THE SENTINELS. GOOD RIDDANCE.

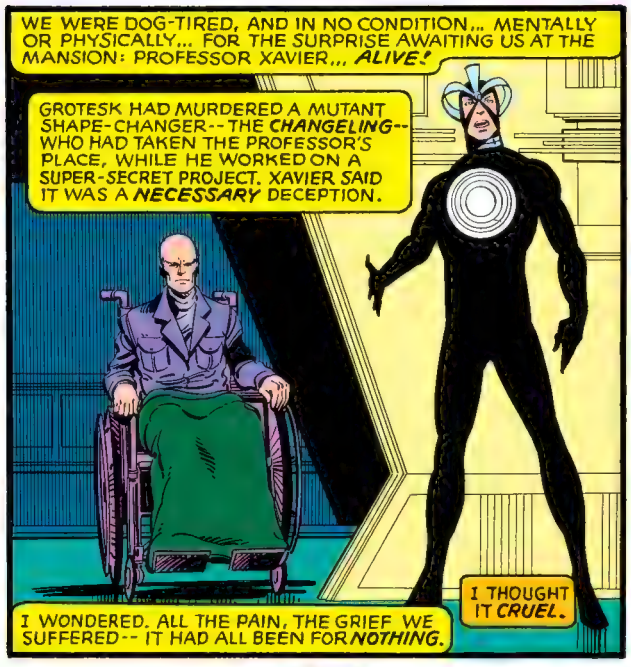

BUT WE'D SUFFERED A CASUALTY... ALEX. WE RUSHED HIM TO A COLLEAGUE OF THE PROFESSOR'S, DR. KARL LYKOS... NOT ONE OF OUR BRIGHTER MOVES. LYKOS, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS A NON-MUTANT VARIENT WHO EXISTED BY ABSORBING THE LIFE FORCE FROM OTHER BEINGS. DOING THAT TO ALEX...

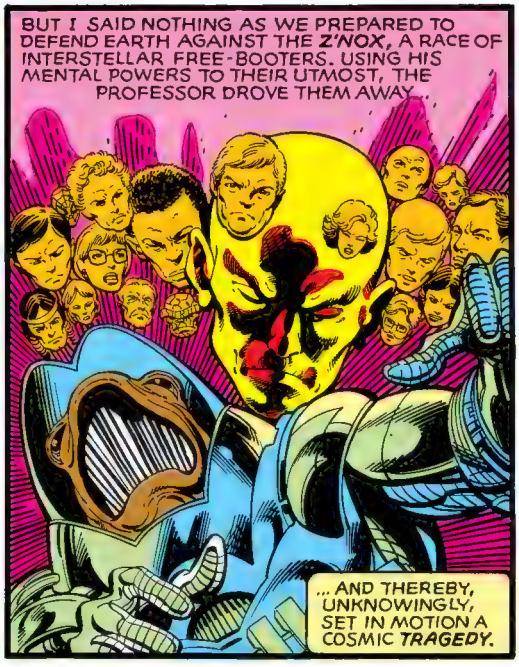

...TRANSFORMED LYKOS INTO SAURON -- A HUMANOID PTERODACTYL WITH HYPNOTIC/ILLUSION POWERS THAT PUT BOTH MESMERO AND MASTERMIND TO SHAME.
LYKOS WAS A DRIVEN, TORMENTED SOUL, BUT BASICALLY A GOOD MAN. HE WANTED ONLY TO BE WORTHY OF TANYA ANDERSSEN, THE WOMAN HE LOVED. SAURON, THOUGH, WAS A CREATURE OF PURE EVIL.


WE FOUGHT HIM IN NEW YORK, AND FOLLOWED HIM WHEN HE FLED TO HIS HOME IN TIERRA DEL FUEGO.
KARL!!
THERE, RATHER THAN SURVIVE BY KILLING TANYA, LYKOS TOOK HIS OWN LIFE.

OUR UNSUCCESSFUL QUEST TO RECOVER LYKOS' BODY LED TO KA-ZAR'S SAVAGE LAND, AND YET ANOTHER CONFRONTATION WITH MAGNETO.
HE FOUGHT HARD, AS USUAL. HE LOST.

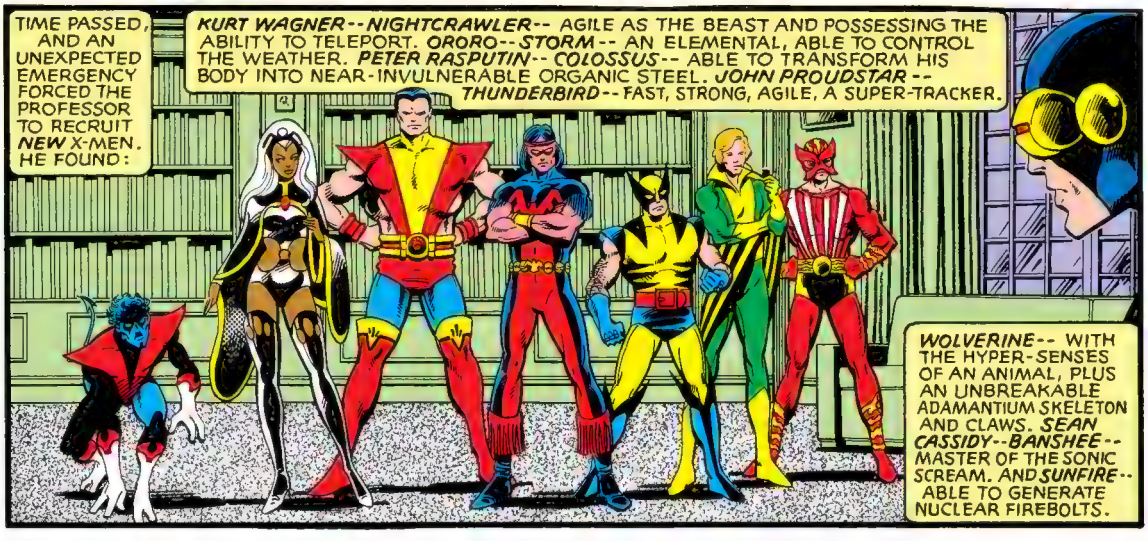
NO SOONER HAD WE RETURNED HOME THAN WE FACED YET ANOTHER MUTANT THREAT, A JAPANESE YOUTH: SHIRO YASHIDA -- SUNFIRE!
HE WASN'T EVIL, MERELY MISGUIDED -- BUT IT TOOK THE VIOLENT DEATH OF HIS FATHER TO SHOW HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS.


WE WERE DOG-TIRED, AND IN NO CONDITION... MENTALLY OR PHYSICALLY... FOR THE SURPRISE AWAITING US AT THE MANSION: PROFESSOR XAVIER... ALIVE!
GROTESK HAD MURDERED A MUTANT SHAPE-CHANGER-- THE CHANGELING-- WHO HAD TAKEN THE PROFESSOR'S PLACE, WHILE HE WORKED ON A SUPER-SECRET PROJECT. XAVIER SAID IT WAS A NECESSARY DECEPTION.
I THOUGHT IT CRUEL.
I WONDERED. ALL THE PAIN, THE GRIEF WE SUFFERED-- IT HAD ALL BEEN FOR NOTHING.


BUT I SAID NOTHING AS WE PREPARED TO DEFEND EARTH AGAINST THE Z'NOX, A RACE OF INTERSTELLAR FREE-BOOTERS. USING HIS MENTAL POWERS TO THEIR UTMOST, THE PROFESSOR DROVE THEM AWAY...
... AND THEREBY, UNKNOWINGLY, SET IN MOTION A COSMIC TRAGEDY.

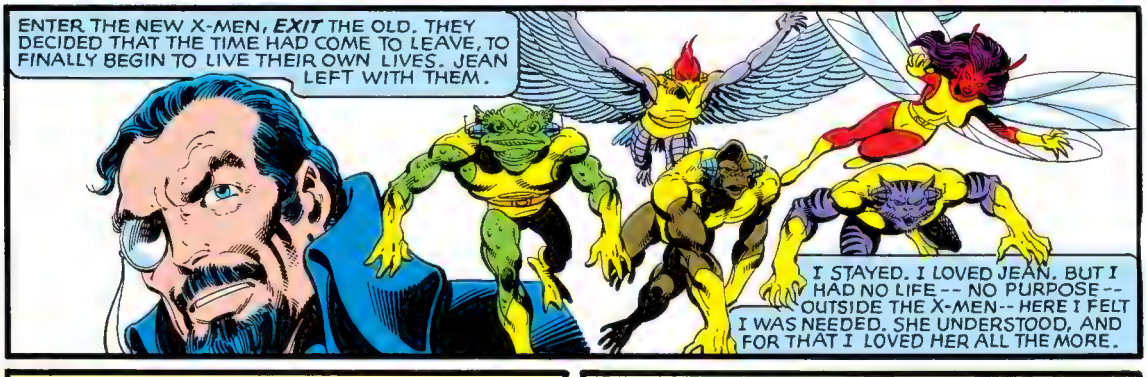
CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT ALTERNATIVE DID HE HAVE? GOOD OR BAD, HE DID WHAT HE THOUGHT BEST.
AS HANK DID WHEN HE LEFT THE X-MEN SOON AFTER THAT TO GO TO WORK FOR THE BRAND CORPORATION.

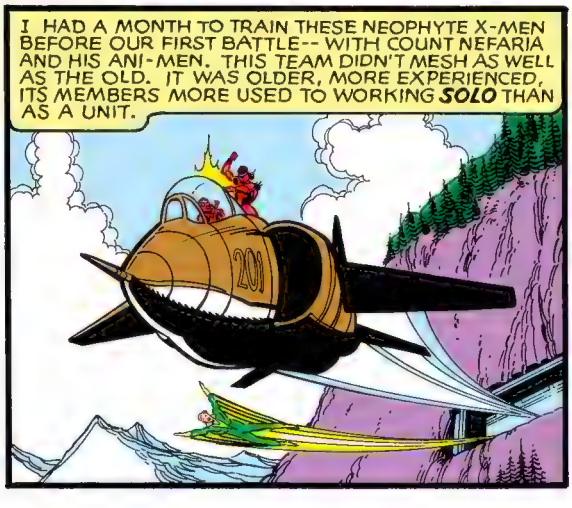
SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HIM THERE-- HE STILL WON'T SPEAK OF IT. HE MUTATED PHYSICALLY, FROM A PERSON WITH THE ABILITY OF A BEAST, TO ONE WITH THE LOOK OF A BEAST AS WELL.
EVEN NOW, HE'S HIDING HIS TRUE FEATURES UNDER A MASK OF HIS OLD FACE.
SINCE THEN, HE QUIT BRAND AND JOINED THE AVENGERS. I HOPE HE'S HAPPY WITH THEM. HE DESERVES IT. WE ALL DO.


TIME PASSED, AND AN UNEXPECTED EMERGENCY FORCED THE PROFESSOR TO RECRUIT NEW X-MEN. HE FOUND:
KURT WAGNER--NIGHTCRAWLER-- AGILE AS THE BEAST AND POSSESSING THE ABILITY TO TELEPORT. ORORO--STORM-- AN ELEMENTAL, ABLE TO CONTROL THE WEATHER. PETER RASPUTIN-- COLOSSUS-- ABLE TO TRANSFORM HIS BODY INTO NEAR-INVULNERABLE ORGANIC STEEL. JOHN PROUDSTAR -- THUNDERBIRD-- FAST, STRONG, AGILE, A SUPER-TRACKER.
WOLVERINE-- WITH THE HYPER-SENSES OF AN ANIMAL, PLUS AN UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM SKELETON AND CLAWS. SEAN CASSIDY--BANSHEE-- MASTER OF THE SONIC SCREAM. AND SUNFIRE-- ABLE TO GENERATE NUCLEAR FIREBOLTS.

THE *NEW* TEAM'S FIRST MISSION WAS TO RESCUE THE OLD FROM THE CLUTCHES OF A LIVING ISLAND--
--A MUTANT COLONY CREATURE THAT CALLED ITSELF *KRAKOA*.

COMBINING THE POWERS OF MYSELF, ALEX, STORM AND POLARIS, WE MANAGED TO SEVER THE GRAVIMETRIC LINES OF FORCE BENEATH THE ISLAND. FOR A MOMENT, GRAVITY THERE CEASED TO EXIST.
MOTHER NATURE DID THE REST.
CENTRIFUGAL FORCE RIPPED KRAKOA OUT OF THE SEABED AND HURLED IT INTO SPACE.


ENTER THE NEW X-MEN, *EXIT* THE OLD. THEY DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO LEAVE, TO FINALLY BEGIN TO LIVE THEIR OWN LIVES. JEAN LEFT WITH THEM.
I STAYED. I LOVED JEAN. BUT I HAD NO LIFE -- NO PURPOSE -- OUTSIDE THE X-MEN -- HERE I FELT I WAS NEEDED. SHE UNDERSTOOD, AND FOR THAT I LOVED HER ALL THE MORE.


I HAD A MONTH TO TRAIN THESE NEOPHYTE X-MEN BEFORE OUR FIRST BATTLE -- WITH COUNT NEFARIA AND HIS ANI-MEN. THIS TEAM DIDN'T MESH AS WELL AS THE OLD. IT WAS OLDER, MORE EXPERIENCED, ITS MEMBERS MORE USED TO WORKING *SOLO* THAN AS A UNIT.
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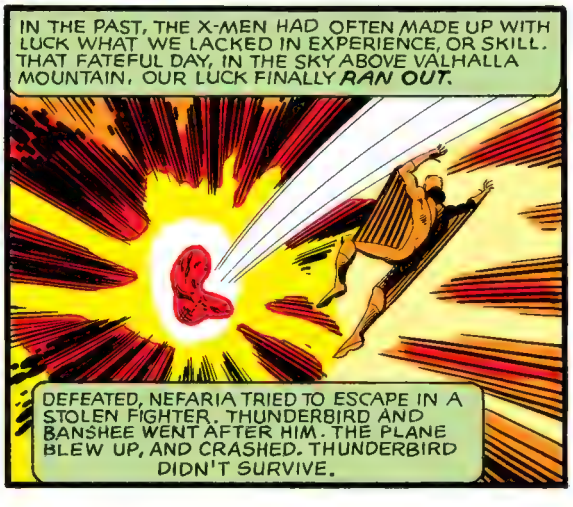
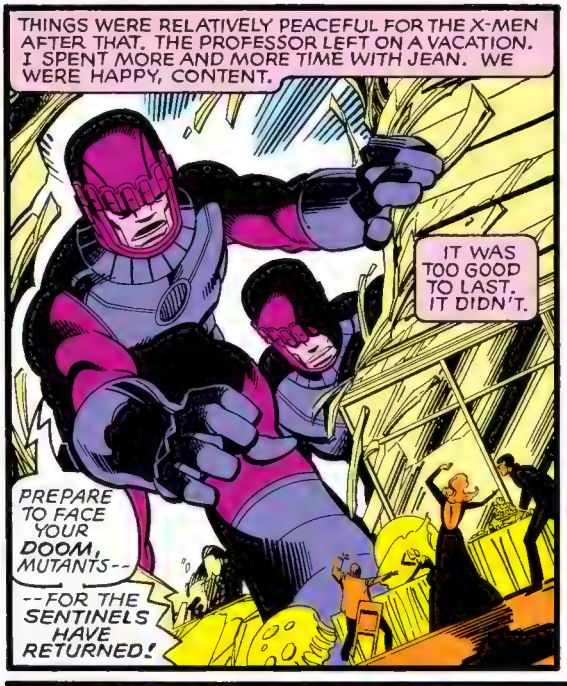
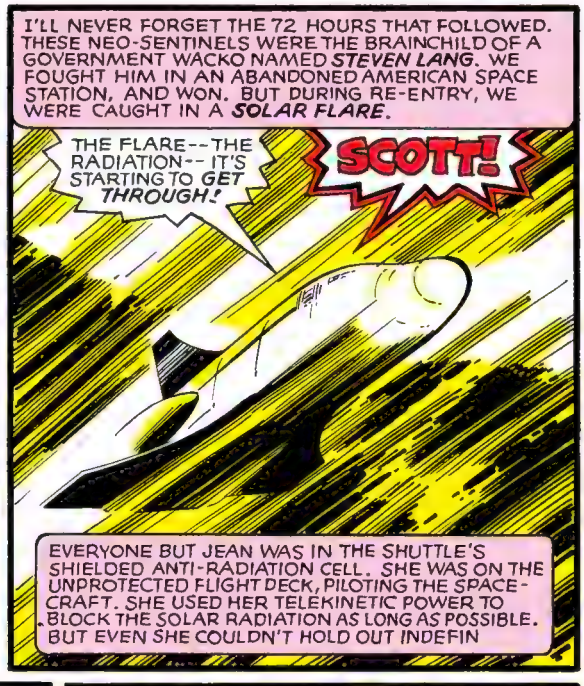

IN THE PAST, THE X-MEN HAD OFTEN MADE UP WITH LUCK WHAT WE LACKED IN EXPERIENCE, OR SKILL. THAT FATEFUL DAY, IN THE SKY ABOVE VALHALLA MOUNTAIN, OUR LUCK FINALLY *RAN OUT*.
DEFEATED, NEFARIA TRIED TO ESCAPE IN A STOLEN FIGHTER. THUNDERBIRD AND BANSHEE WENT AFTER HIM. THE PLANE BLEW UP, AND CRASHED. THUNDERBIRD DIDN'T SURVIVE.

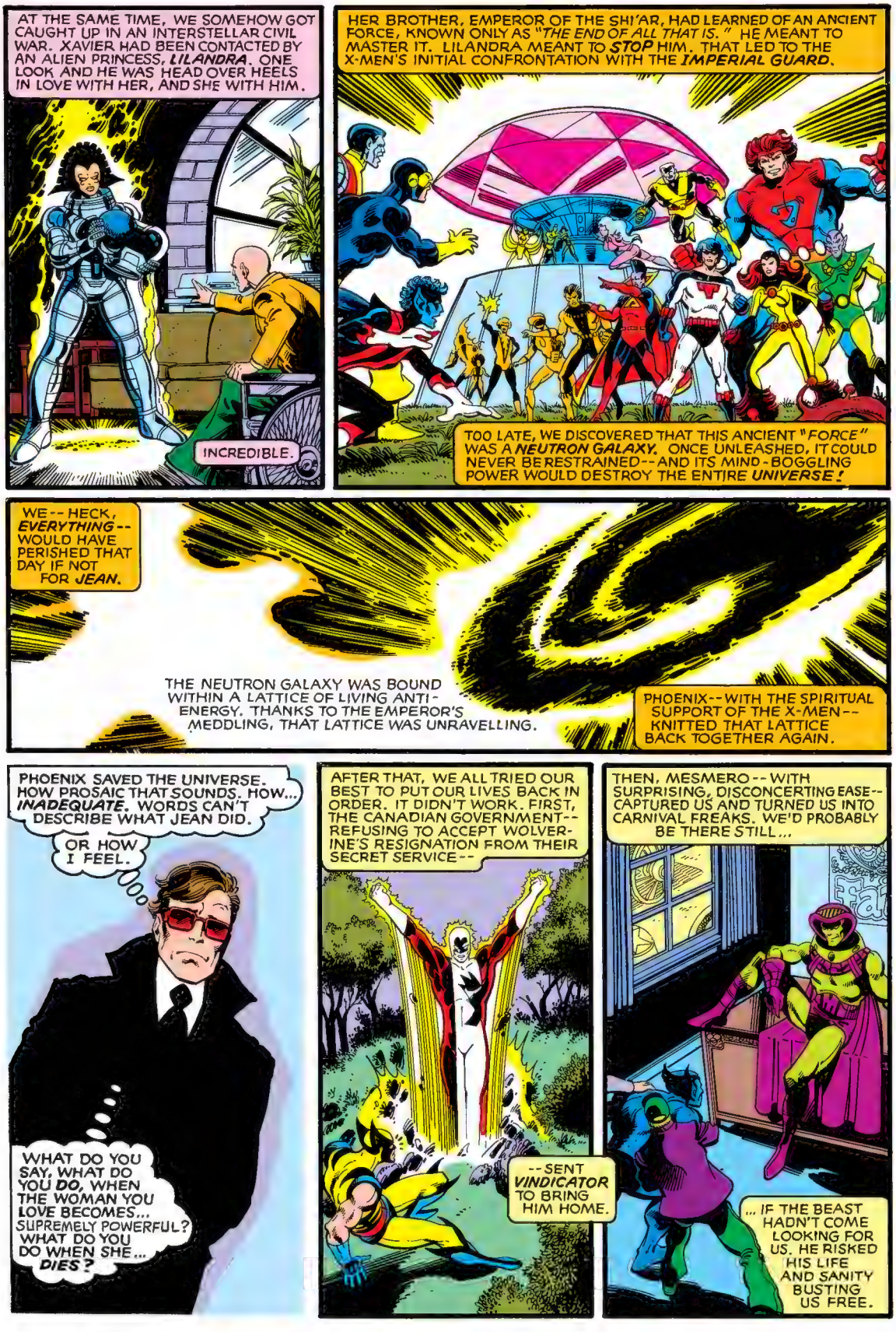
IS THAT WHEN I BEGAN TO QUESTION -- TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?
DID IT TAKE THUNDERBIRD'S DEATH TO MAKE ME REALIZE THE TRUE COST OF A MISTAKE?
I KEEP REMEMBERING WHAT ORORO ASKED ME NOT LONG AGO -- IF THIS WAS THE LIFE I IMAGINED FOR MYSELF WHEN I WAS YOUNG?
WAS THIS THE LIFE ANY OF US IMAGINED FOR OURSELVES?

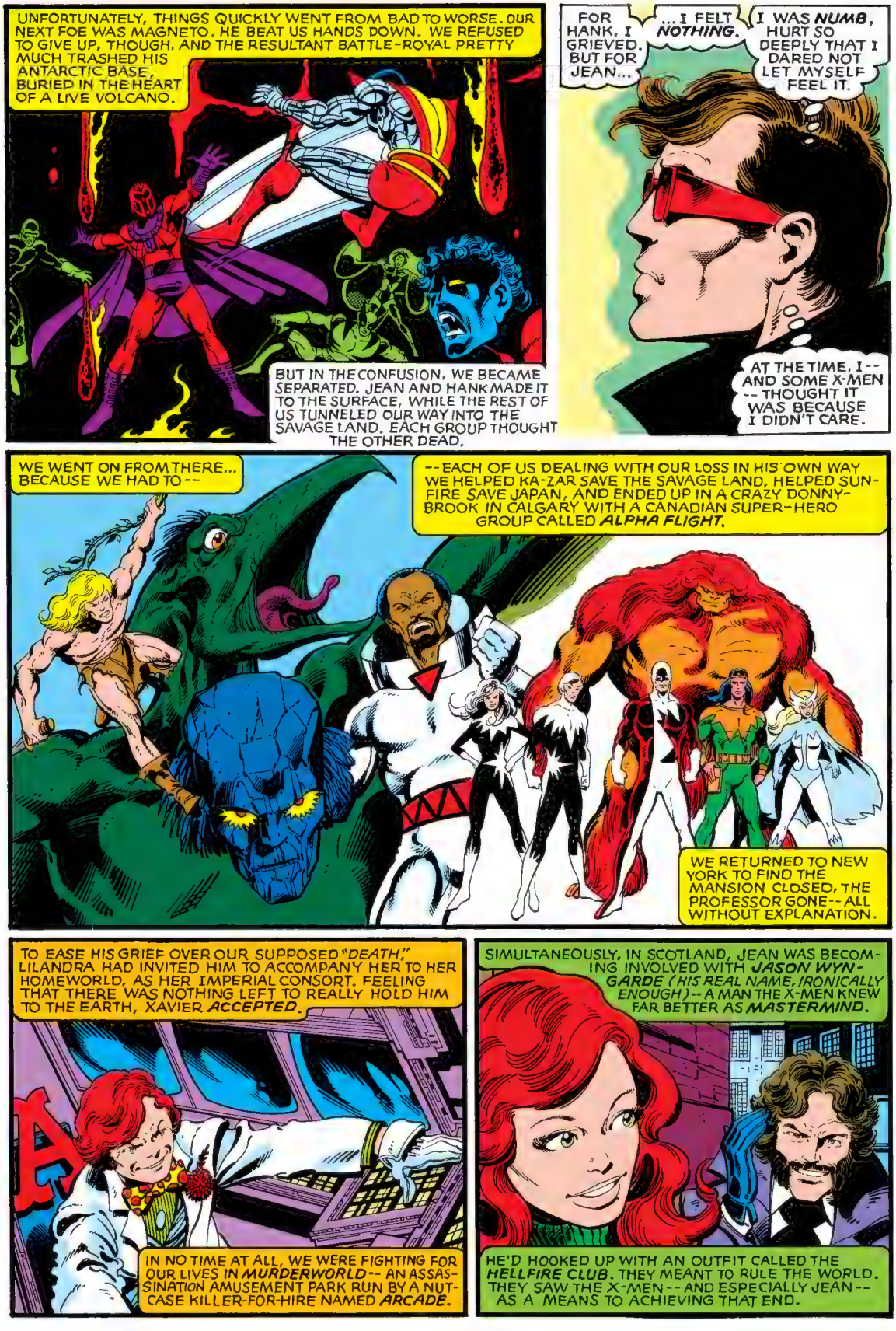

THINGS WERE RELATIVELY PEACEFUL FOR THE X-MEN AFTER THAT. THE PROFESSOR LEFT ON A VACATION. I SPENT MORE AND MORE TIME WITH JEAN. WE WERE HAPPY, CONTENT.
IT WAS TOO GOOD TO LAST. IT DIDN'T.
PREPARE TO FACE YOUR DOOM, MUTANTS--
--FOR THE SENTINELS HAVE RETURNED!

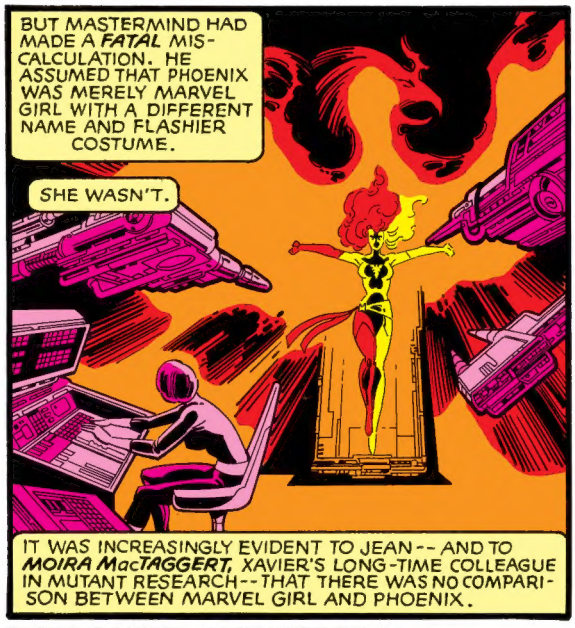

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE 72 HOURS THAT FOLLOWED. THESE NEO-SENTINELS WERE THE BRAINCHILD OF A GOVERNMENT WACKO NAMED STEVEN LANG. WE FOUGHT HIM IN AN ABANDONED AMERICAN SPACE STATION, AND WON. BUT DURING RE-ENTRY, WE WERE CAUGHT IN A SOLAR FLARE.
THE FLARE--THE RADIATION--IT'S STARTING TO GET THROUGH!
SCOTT!
EVERYONE BUT JEAN WAS IN THE SHUTTLE'S SHIELDED ANTI-RADIATION CELL. SHE WAS ON THE UNPROTECTED FLIGHT DECK, PILOTING THE SPACECRAFT. SHE USED HER TELEKINETIC POWER TO BLOCK THE SOLAR RADIATION AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. BUT EVEN SHE COULDN'T HOLD OUT INDEFIN

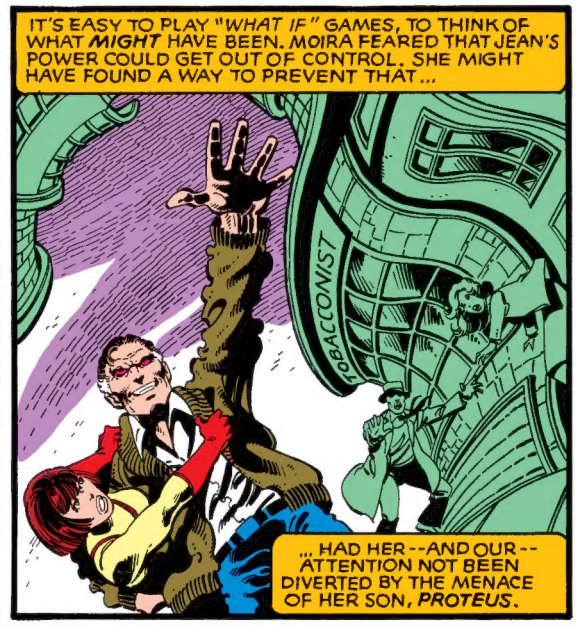
WE ALL THOUGHT SHE'D DIED. CERTAINLY NOTHING EVEN REMOTELY HUMAN COULD HAVE SURVIVED.
NOTHING REMOTELY HUMAN DID.
HEAR ME, X-MEN!
NO LONGER AM I THE WOMAN YOU KNEW!
I AM FIRE! AND LIFE INCARNATE! NOW AND FOREVER--
--I AM phœnix!

PART OF ME WISHES JEAN HAD... DIED IN THAT CRASH. AND YET... I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS LAST MONTH -- OUR LAST WEEKS TOGETHER -- FOR THE WORLD.
XAVIER SENT THE X-MEN TO IRELAND FOR A VACATION -- WHILE I STAYED WITH JEAN IN NEW YORK. SOME VACATION. FIRST THEY FOUGHT JUGGERNAUT AND HIS NEW PARTNER--BANSHEE'S VILLAINOUS COUSIN, BLACK TOM CASSIDY-- AND THEN MAGNETO.

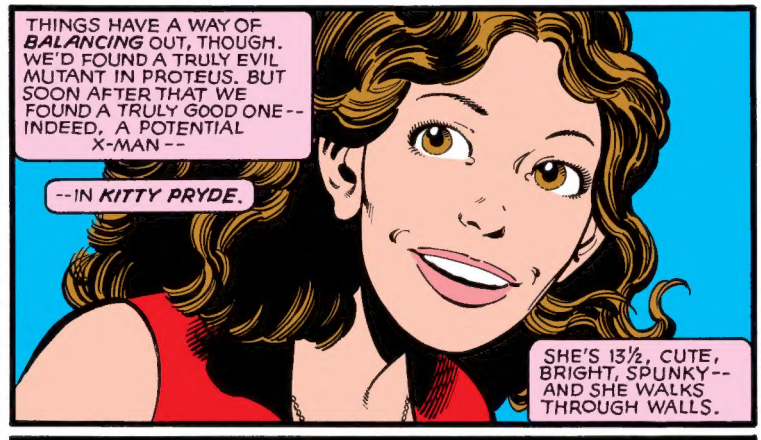

AT THE SAME TIME, WE SOMEHOW GOT CAUGHT UP IN AN INTERSTELLAR CIVIL WAR. XAVIER HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY AN ALIEN PRINCESS, LILANDRA. ONE LOOK AND HE WAS HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE WITH HER, AND SHE WITH HIM.
INCREDIBLE.
HER BROTHER, EMPEROR OF THE SHI'AR, HAD LEARNED OF AN ANCIENT FORCE, KNOWN ONLY AS "THE END OF ALL THAT IS." HE MEANT TO MASTER IT. LILANDRA MEANT TO STOP HIM. THAT LED TO THE X-MEN'S INITIAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE IMPERIAL GUARD.
TOO LATE, WE DISCOVERED THAT THIS ANCIENT "FORCE" WAS A NEUTRON GALAXY. ONCE UNLEASHED, IT COULD NEVER BE RESTRAINED--AND ITS MIND-BOGGLING POWER WOULD DESTROY THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!
WE--HECK, EVERYTHING--WOULD HAVE PERISHED THAT DAY IF NOT FOR JEAN.
THE NEUTRON GALAXY WAS BOUND WITHIN A LATTICE OF LIVING ANTI-ENERGY. THANKS TO THE EMPEROR'S MEDDLING, THAT LATTICE WAS UNRAVELLING.
PHOENIX--WITH THE SPIRITUAL SUPPORT OF THE X-MEN--KNITTED THAT LATTICE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.
PHOENIX SAVED THE UNIVERSE. HOW PROSAIC THAT SOUNDS. HOW... INADEQUATE. WORDS CAN'T DESCRIBE WHAT JEAN DID.
OR HOW I FEEL.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, WHAT DO YOU DO, WHEN THE WOMAN YOU LOVE BECOMES... SUPREMELY POWERFUL? WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN SHE... DIES?
AFTER THAT, WE ALL TRIED OUR BEST TO PUT OUR LIVES BACK IN ORDER. IT DIDN'T WORK. FIRST, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT--REFUSING TO ACCEPT WOLVERINE'S RESIGNATION FROM THEIR SECRET SERVICE--
--SENT VINDICATOR TO BRING HIM HOME.
THEN, MESMERO--WITH SURPRISING, DISCONCERTING EASE--CAPTURED US AND TURNED US INTO CARNIVAL FREAKS. WE'D PROBABLY BE THERE STILL...
... IF THE BEAST HADN'T COME LOOKING FOR US. HE RISKED HIS LIFE AND SANITY BUSTING US FREE.

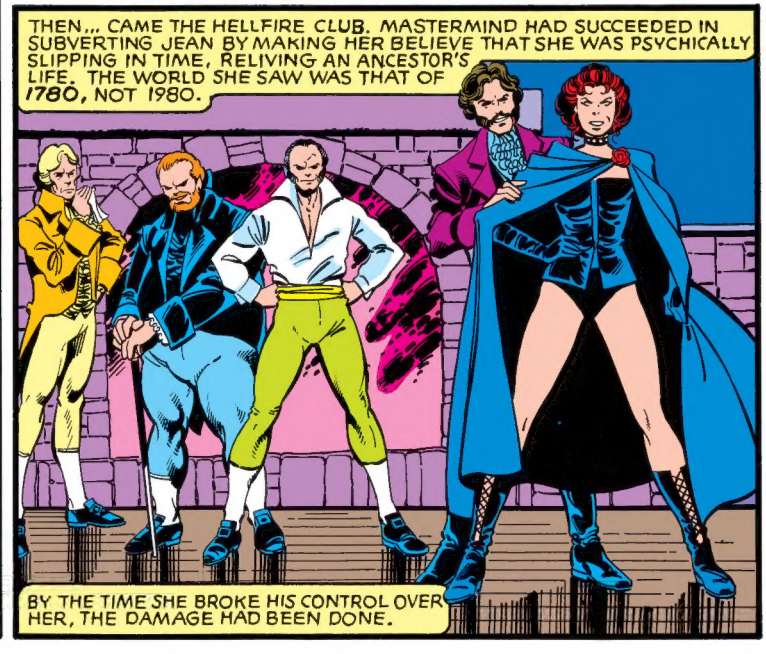

UNFORTUNATELY, THINGS QUICKLY WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE. OUR NEXT FOE WAS MAGNETO. HE BEAT US HANDS DOWN. WE REFUSED TO GIVE UP, THOUGH, AND THE RESULTANT BATTLE-ROYAL PRETTY MUCH TRASHED HIS ANTARCTIC BASE, BURIED IN THE HEART OF A LIVE VOLCANO.
BUT IN THE CONFUSION, WE BECAME SEPARATED. JEAN AND HANK MADE IT TO THE SURFACE, WHILE THE REST OF US TUNNELED OUR WAY INTO THE SAVAGE LAND. EACH GROUP THOUGHT THE OTHER DEAD.
FOR HANK, I GRIEVED. BUT FOR JEAN...
...I FELT NOTHING.
I WAS NUMB, HURT SO DEEPLY THAT I DARED NOT LET MYSELF FEEL IT.
AT THE TIME, I -- AND SOME X-MEN -- THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE I DIDN'T CARE.
WE WENT ON FROM THERE... BECAUSE WE HAD TO --
--EACH OF US DEALING WITH OUR LOSS IN HIS OWN WAY WE HELPED KA-ZAR SAVE THE SAVAGE LAND, HELPED SUN-FIRE SAVE JAPAN, AND ENDED UP IN A CRAZY DONNY-BROOK IN CALGARY WITH A CANADIAN SUPER-HERO GROUP CALLED ALPHA FLIGHT.
WE RETURNED TO NEW YORK TO FIND THE MANSION CLOSED, THE PROFESSOR GONE -- ALL WITHOUT EXPLANATION.
TO EASE HIS GRIEF OVER OUR SUPPOSED "DEATH," LILANDRA HAD INVITED HIM TO ACCOMPANY HER TO HER HOMEWORLD, AS HER IMPERIAL CONSORT. FEELING THAT THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO REALLY HOLD HIM TO THE EARTH, XAVIER ACCEPTED.
IN NO TIME AT ALL, WE WERE FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES IN MURDERWORLD -- AN ASSASSINATION AMUSEMENT PARK RUN BY A NUT-CASE KILLER-FOR-HIRE NAMED ARCADE.
SIMULTANEOUSLY, IN SCOTLAND, JEAN WAS BECOMING INVOLVED WITH JASON WYNGARDE (HIS REAL NAME, IRONICALLY ENOUGH) -- A MAN THE X-MEN KNEW FAR BETTER AS MASTERMIND.
HE'D HOOKED UP WITH AN OUTFIT CALLED THE HELLFIRE CLUB. THEY MEANT TO RULE THE WORLD. THEY SAW THE X-MEN -- AND ESPECIALLY JEAN -- AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVING THAT END.

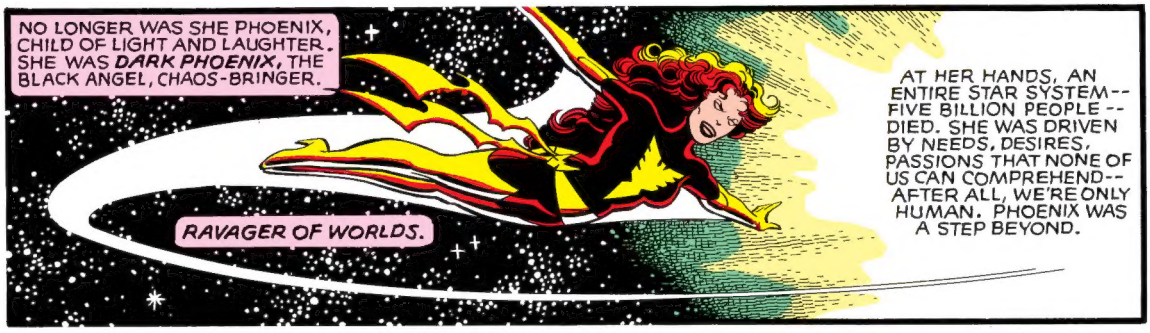

BUT MASTERMIND HAD MADE A *FATAL* MIS-CALCULATION. HE ASSUMED THAT PHOENIX WAS MERELY MARVEL GIRL WITH A DIFFERENT NAME AND FLASHIER COSTUME.
SHE WASN'T.
IT WAS INCREASINGLY EVIDENT TO JEAN -- AND TO *MOIRA MacTAGGERT*, XAVIER'S LONG-TIME COLLEAGUE IN MUTANT RESEARCH -- THAT THERE WAS NO COMPARISON BETWEEN MARVEL GIRL AND PHOENIX.

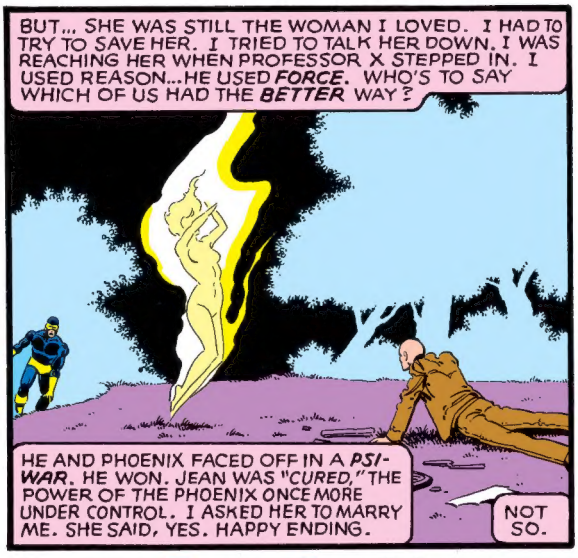

IT'S EASY TO PLAY "*WHAT IF*" GAMES, TO THINK OF WHAT *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN. MOIRA FEARED THAT JEAN'S POWER COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL. SHE MIGHT HAVE FOUND A WAY TO PREVENT THAT...
TOBACCONIST
... HAD HER -- AND OUR -- ATTENTION NOT BEEN DIVERTED BY THE MENACE OF HER SON, *PROTEUS*.

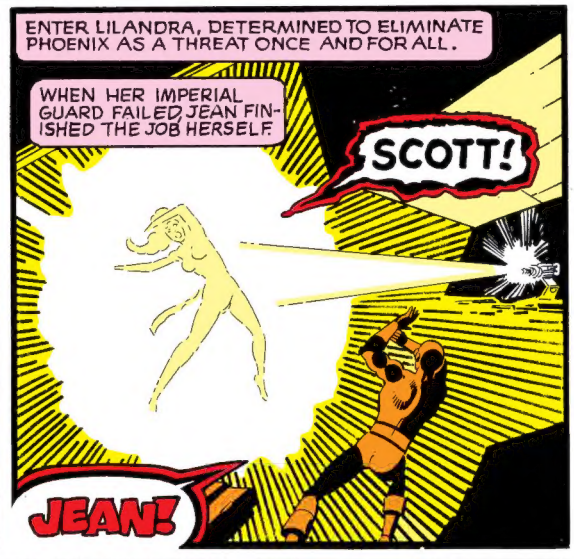
TO EXIST, HE POSSESSED PEOPLE -- CONSUMING A LIFETIME'S WORTH OF BIO-ENERGY IN A MATTER OF HOURS. HE THOUGHT OF PEOPLE THE WAY WE THINK OF COWS -- AS *FOOD*. IF HE HUNGERED FOR A LIFE, HE *TOOK* IT.
HE WAS THE KIND OF MUTANT THE X-MEN HAD BEEN FORMED TO COMBAT.
MY ONE REGRET WAS THAT OUR BATTLE WITH PROTEUS WAS TO THE *DEATH*. IT WAS NECESSARY, BUT I WISH THERE'D BEEN ANOTHER WAY.

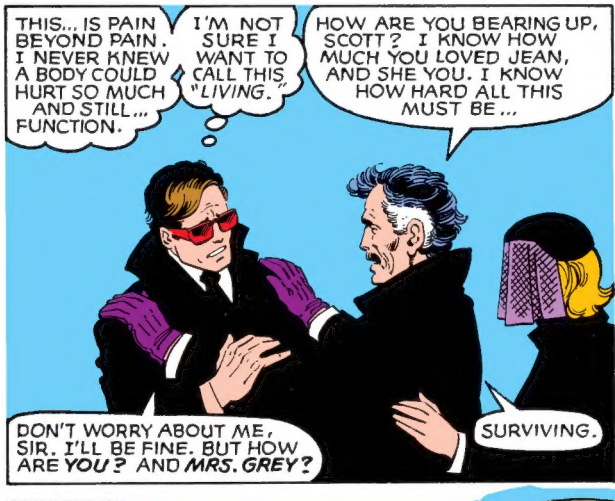

THINGS HAVE A WAY OF *BALANCING* OUT, THOUGH. WE'D FOUND A TRULY EVIL MUTANT IN PROTEUS. BUT SOON AFTER THAT WE FOUND A TRULY GOOD ONE -- INDEED, A POTENTIAL X-MAN --
-- IN *KITTY PRYDE*.
SHE'S 13½, CUTE, BRIGHT, SPUNKY -- AND SHE WALKS THROUGH WALLS.


THEN... CAME THE HELLFIRE CLUB. MASTERMIND HAD SUCCEEDED IN SUBVERTING JEAN BY MAKING HER BELIEVE THAT SHE WAS PSYCHICALLY SLIPPING IN TIME, RELIVING AN ANCESTOR'S LIFE. THE WORLD SHE SAW WAS THAT OF *1780*, NOT 1980.
BY THE TIME SHE BROKE HIS CONTROL OVER HER, THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE.


NO LONGER WAS SHE PHOENIX, CHILD OF LIGHT AND LAUGHTER. SHE WAS DARK PHOENIX, THE BLACK ANGEL, CHAOS-BRINGER.
RAVAGER OF WORLDS.
AT HER HANDS, AN ENTIRE STAR SYSTEM-- FIVE BILLION PEOPLE -- DIED. SHE WAS DRIVEN BY NEEDS, DESIRES, PASSIONS THAT NONE OF US CAN COMPREHEND-- AFTER ALL, WE'RE ONLY HUMAN. PHOENIX WAS A STEP BEYOND.


BUT... SHE WAS STILL THE WOMAN I LOVED. I HAD TO TRY TO SAVE HER. I TRIED TO TALK HER DOWN. I WAS REACHING HER WHEN PROFESSOR X STEPPED IN. I USED REASON...HE USED FORCE. WHO'S TO SAY WHICH OF US HAD THE BETTER WAY?
HE AND PHOENIX FACED OFF IN A PSI-WAR. HE WON. JEAN WAS "CURED," THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX ONCE MORE UNDER CONTROL. I ASKED HER TO MARRY ME. SHE SAID, YES. HAPPY ENDING.
NOT SO.

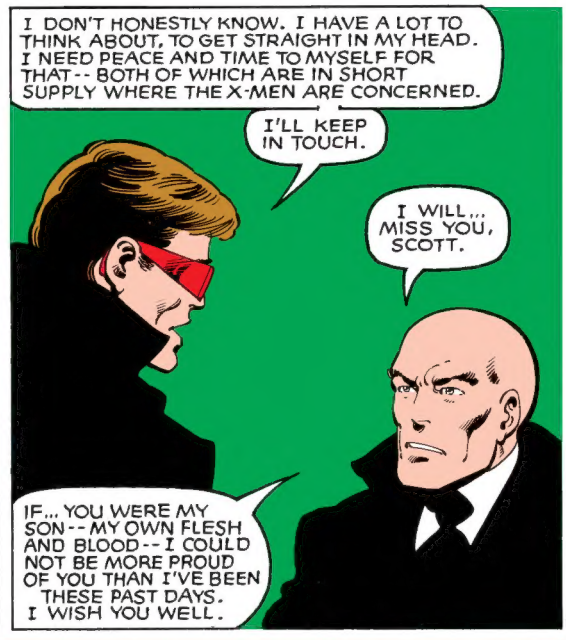

ENTER LILANDRA, DETERMINED TO ELIMINATE PHOENIX AS A THREAT ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WHEN HER IMPERIAL GUARD FAILED, JEAN FINISHED THE JOB HERSELF.
SCOTT!
JEAN!


THIS... IS PAIN BEYOND PAIN. I NEVER KNEW A BODY COULD HURT SO MUCH AND STILL... FUNCTION.
I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO CALL THIS "LIVING."
HOW ARE YOU BEARING UP, SCOTT? I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LOVED JEAN, AND SHE YOU. I KNOW HOW HARD ALL THIS MUST BE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, SIR. I'LL BE FINE. BUT HOW ARE YOU? AND MRS. GREY?
SURVIVING.

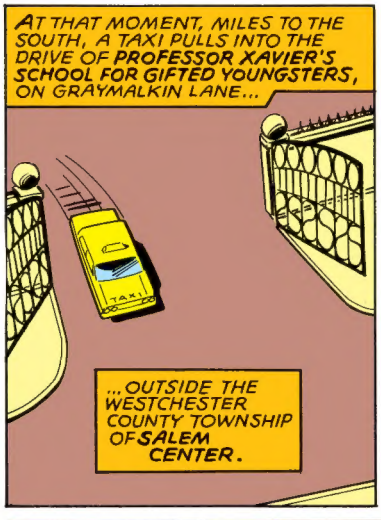
PROFESSOR GREY, I SPEAK FOR ALL SHI'AR WHEN I SAY HOW... SORRY WE ARE AT YOUR DAUGHTER'S DEATH. YOUR GRIEF IS OURS.
THANK YOU, YOUR... MAJESTY. THAT'S VERY KIND.
SO LONG AS I RULE, SO LONG AS SHI'AR ENDURES, JEAN GREY'S NAME AND MEMORY WILL BE
SHE GAVE HER LIFE, THAT THE UNIVERSE MIGHT LIVE.

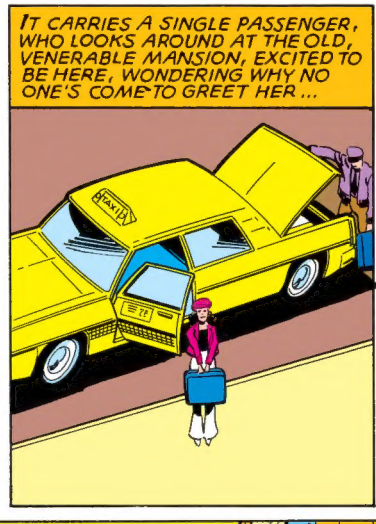
PLEASE ACCEPT THIS GIFT. IT IS A HOLEMPATHIC MATRIX CRYSTAL. TOUCH IT, AND YOU WILL NOT ONLY SEE A 3-DIMENSIONAL IMAGE OF JEAN, BUT FEEL THE ESSENCE OF HER PERSONALITY AS WELL. THIS WAY, A PART OF HER WILL BE WITH YOU, ALWAYS.
Th-thank you.

WELL, I GUESS IT'S TIME I SAID GOOD-BYE.
WHY, SCOTT? AREN'T YOU COMING HOME WITH US?
NO, KURT. I'M LEAVING THE X-MEN, PROFESSOR.
SCOTT-- NO!
I EXPECTED AS MUCH. WILL YOU BE BACK?

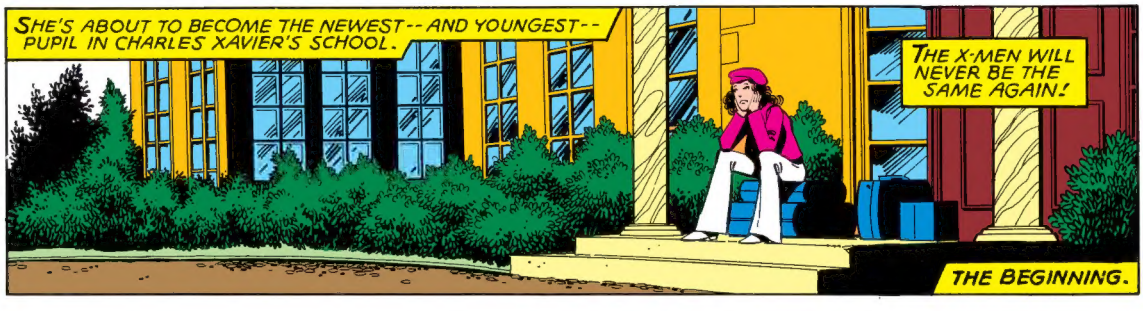

I DON'T HONESTLY KNOW. I HAVE A LOT TO THINK ABOUT, TO GET STRAIGHT IN MY HEAD. I NEED PEACE AND TIME TO MYSELF FOR THAT-- BOTH OF WHICH ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY WHERE THE X-MEN ARE CONCERNED.
I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH.
I WILL... MISS YOU, SCOTT.
IF... YOU WERE MY SON-- MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD-- I COULD NOT BE MORE PROUD OF YOU THAN I'VE BEEN THESE PAST DAYS. I WISH YOU WELL.

I'M ALONE-- BUT THAT DOESN'T BOTHER ME ANYMORE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'LL GO, WHAT I'LL DO. ONLY ONE THING IS CERTAIN, THAT-- NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS-- I WON'T CRAWL BACK INTO MY SHELL AGAIN. WITH JEAN, I BECAME FULLY ALIVE-- A WHOLE HUMAN BEING. I INTEND TO STAY THAT WAY.
I OWE HER THAT MUCH, AT LEAST.
THE END.


AT THAT MOMENT, MILES TO THE SOUTH, A TAXI PULLS INTO THE DRIVE OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS, ON GRAYMALKIN LANE...
TAXI
...OUTSIDE THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY TOWNSHIP OF SALEM CENTER.


IT CARRIES A SINGLE PASSENGER, WHO LOOKS AROUND AT THE OLD, VENERABLE MANSION, EXCITED TO BE HERE, WONDERING WHY NO ONE'S COME TO GREET HER...
TAXI

... AND WISHING THE BUTTERFLIES IN HER STOMACH WOULD TAKE A HIKE.
HER NAME, AS YOU MAY HAVE GUESSED, IS KITTY PRYDE.


SHE'S ABOUT TO BECOME THE NEWEST-- AND YOUNGEST-- PUPIL IN CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
THE X-MEN WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!
THE BEGINNING.

MINUTEMEN

Sy13nt
Bob